

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01 TAR-01 SP-02 AGR-05

AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07 IO-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00

OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 CEA-01 AF-06

ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 /099 W

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R 111527Z AUG 75

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5176

INFO USUN NEW YORK 2231

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UNCTAD, ETRD

SUBJECT: UNCTAD: AGENDA FOR UNCTAD IV

1. SUMMARY. SECRETARY-GENERAL COREA'S OPENING ADDRESS CONCENTRATED ON PREPARATION OF AGENDA FOR UNCTAD IV. IN PLENARY DISCUSSION OF AGENDA, GROUP B COORDINATOR (AMB. PUTMAN OF BELGIUM) MADE STATEMENT SUPPORTING A SELECTIVE AGENDA AND CAUTIONING THAT LANGUAGE OF AGENDA ITEMS NOT ANTICIPATE POSSIBLE DECISIONS OR MEASURES WHICH CONFERENCE MIGHT TAKE. CONTACT GROUP FORMED AUGUST 7 TO PREPARE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OR LIST OF ISSUES TO BE FORWARDED TO UNGA SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION (7SS). DELEGATES OF A NUMBER OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INDICATED DESIRE FOR BROAD AGENDA, BUT SEVERAL KEY DELEGATES, INCLUDING MALAYSIAN AND BRAZILIAN, INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO HAVE SELECTIVE AGENDA IF THE FEW ISSUES ON IT, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY COMMODITIES, WOULD RECEIVE SERIOUS ATTENTION BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. GROUP B IN CAUCUS CONCLUDED IT UNABLE TO INDICATE ANY SUCH SELECTIVE AGENDA PRIOR TO 7SS AND POSSIBLE PARIS CONFERENCE, BUT WOULD ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN NEUTRAL FORMULATION OF AGENDA ITEMS. TIME APPEARS RIPE FOR U.S. TO PREPARE FOR UNCTAD IV, EVALUATE ITS IMPORTANCE AND SELECT ISSUES WITH WHICH

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WE WISH IT TO DEAL. END SUMMARY.

2. UNCTAD SECRETARY-GENERAL'S OPENING ADDRESS TO TDB CONCENTRATED ON WORK TO BE DONE AT UNCTAD IV AND HIS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGENDA CONTAINED IN TD/B/L/404. HE STRESSED THE URGENT NEED TO DEAL NOT ONLY WITH PROBLEMS EMERGING DURING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC RECESSION BUT ALSO WITH THE WIDER GOAL OF A BASIC RESTRUCTURING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM. HE CALLED ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANT MEETINGS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD, NOTABLY THE UNGA SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION (7SS) AND THE PROBABLE PARIS CONFERENCE ON ENERGY, RAW MATERIALS AND DEVELOPMENT AND SUGGESTED THAT UNCTAD IV COULD BE A CULMINATION OF THESE DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAW THE 7SS AND THE PARIS CONFERENCE GENERATING THE POLITICAL WILL TO EFFECT CHANGES AND UNCTAD IV, BUILDING UPON UNCTAD'S SPECIALIZATION AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, AS THE OCCASION FOR TRANSLATING POLICIES INTO ACTION, FOR PRODUCING ACTUAL PROGRAMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION. HE SUGGESTED THAT AT THIS STAGE INSTEAD OF ADOPTING A DETAILED PROVISIONAL AGENDA, BOARD SHOULD PROVIDE GUIDELINES ON ISSUES AND THEMES THAT MAY COME UP FOR NEGOTIATION AT UNCTAD IV.

3. HE REVIEWED AND ELABORATED ON HIS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AGENDA WHICH HE SAW AS EITHER ISSUES SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TO PERMIT SPECIFIC AND OPERATIONAL DECISIONS OR ISSUES ON WHICH INITIATIVES OF A CONCEPTUAL CHARACTER COULD BE LAUNCHED. HIS AGENDA FOR UNCTAD IV WOULD INCLUDE: COMMODITIES, ON WHICH THE TECHNICAL WORK IS WELL ALONG AND WHERE THE NEED IS TO ARRIVE AT A POLITICAL CONSENSUS ON THE KIND OF ACTION TO BE TAKEN; MONEY AND FINANCE, COVERING THE ISSUES OF LDC DEBT, CAPITAL FLOWS TO LDCS, AND REFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY SYSTEM; MANUFACTURES, WHERE UNCTAD IN TD/B/C.2/153 HAS CALLED FOR A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH GOING BEYOND THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE EMPHASIS ON ACCESS TO MARKETS AND TRADE LIBERALIZATION ALONE TO THE OTHER FACETS OF THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROCESS AND THEIR IMPACT ON TRADE AND LDC DEVELOPMENT; TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, WHERE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL HOPES UNCTAD IV WOULD TAKE MAJOR DECISIONS ON THE MODALITIES OF A CODE OF CONDUCT, ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CERTAIN ASPECTS OF A POSSIBLE REVISION OF THE PATENT SYSTEM, AND ON A PROGRAM OF ACTION TO STRENGTHEN THE TECHNOLOGICAL BASE OF LDCS; COOPERATION AMONG LDCS, WHERE AN EFFORT MIGHT BE LAUNCHED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE DIFFERENCES AMONG LDCS SO THAT THEY MIGHT COMPLEMENT AND ASSIST ONE ANOTHER AND DEVELOP THEIR CAPACITY FOR JOINT ACTION; TRADE BETWEEN COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS, AN ITEM INSISTED UPON BY

THE SOVIET BLOC; AND THE INSTITUTIONAL ISSUE OF THE FUTURE ROLE OF UNCTAD, WHERE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, TAKING THE EXPERT GROUP REPORT ON RESTRUCTURING OF THE UN AS A STARTING POINT, SUGGESTS THAT UNCTAD NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED AND TRANSFORMED INTO AN INSTRUMENT FOR REFINING THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT AND FOR CONDUCTING SPECIFIC NEGOTIATIONS AND REACHING AGREEMENTS ON ISSUES THAT IMPINGE ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATES, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A STRENGTHENED UNCTAD, SHOULD GOVERNMENTS SO DECIDE, EVOLVING INTO A COMPREHENSIVE TRADE ORGANIZATION. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL EXPLAINED WHY HE HAD OMITTED FROM HIS RECOMMENDED AGENDA AMONG OTHER ISSUES THOSE OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED, SHIPPING AND INSURANCE.

4. GROUP B MADE A STATEMENT IN PLENARY SUPPORTING A SELECTIVE AGENDA, AGREEING THAT A FINAL SELECTION OF ITEMS COULD NOT BE MADE AT THIS SESSION OF THE BOARD, AND SUGGESTING THAT THE CONTACT GROUP ON THE AGENDA FOR UNCTAD IV SHOULD CONSIDER THE DETAILED WORDING OF THE HEADINGS AND ENSURE THAT THEY DO NOT ANTICIPATE OR PREJUDGE THE DECISIONS OR MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED AT UNCTAD IV.

5. CONTACT GROUP BEGAN WITH AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH INDIA, BRAZIL, VENEZUELA, MEXICO, ARGENTINA, KENYA, NIGERIA, GHANA, SUDAN, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES SPEAKING FROM THE G-77. INDIA, IN COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT, URGED IDENTIFYING SOME GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR UNCTAD IV AS WELL AS DEFINING THE ISSUES. OTHERS SUPPORTED THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AGENDA AND PROPOSED ADDITIONAL ITEMS. SUDAN AND OTHER AFRICANS PROPOSED INCLUSION OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHILE MEXICO WANTED TO ADD SHIPPING AND INSURANCE.

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OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 CEA-01 AF-06

ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 /099 W

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AMBASSADOR LAI OF MALAYSIA, WHO PARTICIPATED IN PREPARING THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EXPERTS REPORT ON COMMODITIES, SAID THAT WHEN EVERYTHING WAS TOTED UP, UNCTAD IV WOULD SUCCEED OR FAIL UPON WHAT IT DID ABOUT COMMODITIES. SO FAR THERE HAD ONLY BEEN A MONOLOGUE ON UNCTAD IV AND HE WOULD WISH GROUP B TO BE MORE PRECISE ABOUT WHAT AREAS OF COMMODITIES OR OTHER SUBJECTS WERE RIPE FOR DECISION MAKING. HE PRIVATELY INDICATED LATER TO SEVERAL GROUP B DELEGATIONS INCLUDING THE US THAT WITHOUT AN INDICATION FROM GROUP B OF WHAT ISSUES IT WAS PREPARED TO DEAL WITH SERIOUSLY, HE AND OTHERS IN THE G-77 WHO SUPPORTED A LIMITED, ACTION-ORIENTED AGENDA WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING THE G-77 TO AGREE. BRAZIL, IN TERMS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF MALAYSIA, CALLED FOR A SELECTIVE AGENDA AND SAID THERE WERE ONLY A FEW AREAS WHERE WORK WAS SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED THAT DECISIONS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY ACTIONS.

6. GROUP B MET AUGUST 8 TO DISCUSS THE PREPARATION OF THE AGENDA. SOME DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA, SPAIN, NORWAY, AND SEVERAL OTHERS, SUPPORTED THE IDEA ARTICULATED BY CANADA THAT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE PRAGMATIC, EVOLUTIONARY BROAD-BASED INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RELATIONS GROUP B SHOULD INDICATE THOSE AREAS WHERE DECISIONS MAY BE POSSIBLE OR OTHERWISE WE WOULD FIND OURSELVES DEALING WITH THE ENTIRE CATALOG OF ISSUES IN AN ATMOSPHERE ALMOST CERTAIN TO LEAD TO CONFRONTATION. OTHER DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING NOTABLY THE U.S. AND FRANCE, FELT THEMSELVES UNABLE TO INDICATE AT THIS TIME, PRIOR TO BOTH THE 7SS AND THE PARIS CONFERENCE, IN WHAT AREAS DECISIONS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AND MORE IMPORTANTLY WHETHER

THEY WOULD BE TAKEN AND PUT INTO EFFECT THROUGH UNCTAD IV. IT WAS AGREED THAT AT THIS POINT GROUP B SHOULD DRAFT NEUTRAL LANGUAGE TO HAVE IN ITS POCKET FOR FORMULATION OF THE ISSUES FOR THE AGENDA. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE G-77 INTEND TO FORWARD SUCH A LIST TO THE 7SS WITH THE IDEA THAT IT COULD IDENTIFY MAJOR ISSUES ON THE LIST, ESTABLISH PRIORITIES AND INDICATE THE BROAD LINES ALONG WHICH SOLUTIONS MAY BE REACHED AT UNCTAD IV.

7. U.S. DEL WILL ATTEMPT TO PREVENT LANGUAGE OF PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS AND SUB-ITEMS FROM PREJUDGING DECISIONS OR MEASURES WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN. IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO DECIDE SOON, IF NOT AT THIS SESSION OF THE TDB, THE ISSUES WITH WHICH THE U.S. WOULD PREFER TO HAVE UNCTAD IV DEAL. THE GENERAL FEELING AMONG BOTH GROUP B AND G-77 DELEGATIONS IS THAT COMMODITIES IS THE CRUCIAL ISSUE, BOTH BETWEEN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE DEVELOPED MARKET ECONOMY COUNTRIES AND IN UNCTAD. THE U.S. NEEDS TO DECIDE WHETHER IT IS PREPARED TO HAVE COMMODITIES ISSUES COME TO A HEAD AND BE DEALT WITH IN UNCTAD OR ELSEWHERE, AS WELL AS WHETHER OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY MIGHT BE READY FOR SOME FURTHER FORMAL STEP AT UNCTAD IV. IT IS CLEAR THAT PROMPTLY AFTER THIS TDB WE SHOULD BEGIN INTERAGENCY CONSIDERATION OF PREPARATIONS FOR UNCTAD IV.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, COMMODITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GENEVA06256
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750276-1088
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750865/aaaacfbx.tel
Line Count: 249
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNCTAD: AGENDA FOR UNCTAD IV
TAGS: ETRD, UNCTAD
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006